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A SERMON

Preached before the

KING

AT

WHITE-HALL,

Septemb. the 26th. 1675.

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And one of his Majesties Chaplains in Ordinary.

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2 Cor. *Chap.* 5. *Ver.* 20.

Now then we are Embaſſadors *for* CHRIST, *as though* GOD *did beſeech you by us, We pray you in* CHRIST's *ſtead, be ye reconciled to* GOD.

THE matter of the Context which Saint *Paul* infers theſe words upon, is of ſuch Tranſcendent Nature and Momentous Conſequence, that it may well beſpeak your attention with that Angels awakening Preface on the like ſubject: *Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to all people*! Tis ſuch a ſtrange and raviſhing piece of News, as *Corinth, the Eye* of all *Greece*, could *not ſee*, till our Apoſtle made the diſcovery: As the itching *Ears* at *Athens* had never *heard* before He told it them too, from the *UNKNOWN GOD*; nor could it enter into the *heart* of Jew or Gentile, Man or

Angel, *to conceive*, till the Eternal *WORD* came down from Heaven on purpose to reveal it. 'Tis that stupendous *Mystery hid from Ages*; that most Magnificent, and most Kingly work of God (as *Clemens* calls it) the Mystery of Man's *Redemption*, to wit, *That God was in Christ, reconciling the World to himself, not imputing their trespasses, making him to be sin for us, that knew no sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him.* Rejoyce then, and *be of good chear, O sons of men*, for *your sins are forgiven*, Divine Justice is satisfied, the Debt paid, the Bond cancell'd, the Prison-doors set ope, and an Act of General Pardon pass'd in the Court of Heaven, and seal'd on Earth with the Blood of *God* Himself, to make it more *unchangeable* than any Decree of the *Medes* and *Persians*. The case is so well alter'd with the Bankrupt, Out-law'd Seed of *Adam*, that nothing hinders now, but all men may be saved and made for ever, if they stand not in their own light: All degrees amongst them, from the Judg of *Areopagus*, to the Jailor at *Philippi*; from the *Lord Treasurer* of *Ethiopia*, to the Beggar at the Temple-gate; from the *Elect Lady*, to the Widow *Dorcas*; from the Houshold of *Cæsar*, to that of *Stephanas*; from the *King* himself that sits upon the *Throne*, to him that grindeth at the *Mill*,

Mill, all have an undoubted Right and Title to God the *Father's* Mercy, if they will but *kiſs* and *reverence* the *Son*; there's nothing wanting but their own conſent to make them all *Heirs of God*, *Joint-heirs with Chriſt* to everlaſting Glory. Conſent? Why, will there be any demur upon that? 'Tis not to part with, but take poſſeſſion of an Inheritance purchas'd for them: Not to *merit* or *buy*, but only to accept and wear an Immortal *Crown*. All's a caſe; Man is a wilful, wiſe, and ſtately Creature, that muſt be wooed and courted to his own Felicity: And our gracious *Lord* (bleſſed be his Name) hath made due Proviſion for that alſo; for when he *aſcended up on high to his former glory*, he left not us to the wide World, nor *Himſelf* without a *witneſs in doing us good*: For he founded a certain Order of men on purpoſe to be his *Delegates* and *Vicars*, to *preach the Goſpel of Peace every where, and Remiſſion of ſins in his Name*, ſaying, as my *Father ſent me, ſo ſend I you, and lo I am with you, and your* Succeſſors, *to the Worlds end*: To them he committed his Word of *Reconciliation*, obliging them by all that is Sacred, to leave no ſtone unturn'd, but uſe all laudable means to perſwade and intreat men (as in his own perſon) to come in upon Proclamation, that they may have life. *Now then We are Embaſſadors*, &c.

In

In the words I ſhall conſider: 1. The Character of the Evangelical Miniſtry; which is, 1. General, *Embaſſadors*; and then more ſpecial and diſtinguiſhing, Embaſſadors for *Chriſt*. 2. The ſubject-*matter*, ſum and purport of their *Embaſſy*, be ye *reconciled to God*. 3. Their *manner of Addreſs*, in delivering this *Embaſſy*, as *though God did beſeech you by us*, we *pray you in Chriſt's ſtead*. I begin with the firſt: and, 1. With their *general Character*, We are *Embaſſadors*.

An *Embaſſador* is properly one that repreſents his *KING* in a *Forein* Country, as a Deputy or Lieutenant doth in his *own Dominions*; whoſe buſineſs is ἰκδημῶ πολίτεια (as the old Greeks call it) to manage his Maſters Affairs, Power and Polity *abroad*; to treat with other great *Kings* and *Emperors* upon the moſt weighty matters: Whereby (I ſuppoſe) he is diſtinguiſh'd from *Nuncio's*, *Agents*, and other modern names of ſuch as are either ſent to *petty Princes*, like thoſe of *Italy* and *Germany*; or if to *Sovereigns*, upon *State-Ceremony*, or Meſſages of *leſſer* moment.

By this *high* Metaphor, the Apoſtle here calls the *Evangelical Miniſtry*; and that (as I conceive) for ſome or other of the enſuing Reaſons.

1. An

1. An *Embaſſador* is ſuppos'd to be a man of *Integrity*, *faithful* to his Inſtructions, and *true* to his important Truſt. No Gifts or Penſions can tempt his impregnable Fidelity to a ſurrender: He's not to be practis'd upon, or won to baſe Compliances with a *Foreign Crown*; as knowing, that if he be taken tardy, or make excurſions beyond his Line, if by his *fraud* or *falſeneſs*, he loſe the leaſt *hair* of his Maſters Honour, it may chance to coſt him his own *head*. Much more is it requir'd of them in the Text, as *Stewards* of the *Myſteries* of *God*, that they be found faithful unto the death. The *falſe* Prophet ſaid but *true* in that, *though Balac would give me his houſe full of Gold and Silver, I cannot go beyond the Commandment of the Lord.* They dare not ſay, *Peace, peace, when there is no peace*; nor flatter any man living in his ſins, to gain *half a Kingdom*. When they addreſs to one of the *Potentates* (ſays *Epictetus*) they remember there is *Another above*, that ſees and hears all that paſſes; and of the two, they are moſt obliged to pleaſe or fear *Him*. His ſurly Yeomen of the Guard could not force the *Lacedemonian Legates* to fall down and worſhip the *mighty Perſian Monarch*, becauſe againſt the expreſs Law of *Lycurgus*: From whence *Origen*

infers, much less should *Men* or *Devils* affright them that are engag'd in this more Divine *Embassy*, to give away their Masters honour to the King of *Persia*, *Greece*, or *any other*, as being contrary to the whole Tenour of his Everlasting Gospel. Wherefore let all such as *Judas*-like, betray their Master for a few shekels of Silver; or teach the *Traditions* of *Men*, and *Doctrines* of *Devils*, for the Word of *God*, be (as St *Paul* saith) *Anathema Maranatha*; that is, stand condemned till their Lord come.

2. An *Embassador* is presum'd to be one of more than common *Prudence*, *Sagacity*, and *Judgment*, that understands his Errand throughly, and such *Imperial Laws* as concern the Pleas of his Masters Crown. *Plutarch* is too light and jocular, when he's for sending them that most *desire*, and least *deserve* it, that so they may be expos'd and *laugh'd* at: For it is no *laughing* matter sure, when *Crowns* and *Kingdoms* lie at stake: They had more need be men of good Wisdom and Brains, that can discern and nick the different humour and Guise of divers Countries, can soar aloft, and treat the *Italian* in a Circuit of pompous words (before they stoop to the *Point*;) and be as blunt with

with the *Switzers*, that *hate* all Language: That underſtand the great Art of *Timing things well*; there being (ſays *Solomon*) *a proper ſeaſon for every purpoſe under Heaven*. I am ſure, our Lord charges his Embaſſadors (ſaving their Innocence) to be wiſe as *Serpents*, as being to deal with that Politick *Old* Serpent, and countermine the depths of *Satan*. On this account Saint *Paul* became *all things to all men*, that *he might by all means ſave ſome*. For one *Remedy* will not ſerve for every *Diſeaſe*, nor are all *Truths* proper to be ſpoken at all times. Our Saviour did not challenge the Jews for *Idolatry* or *Uſury*, but for *ſpiritual Pride*, *Hypocriſie* and *Traditions* (where the ſhooe pinch'd:) But then his Apoſtles *turning* to the *Gentiles*, fell foul upon *Superſtition* and *Idolatry* (their common Diſtempers) the firſt thing they did; to inform their Succeſſors, that they ſhould not ſpend their breath in declaiming againſt ſins quite out of *faſhion*, or confuting old *obſolete* Hereſies (which were much like killing a man that was dead before;) or treating *Chriſtian Aſſemblies* with the ſame Diſcourſe that might better ſerve to convert the *Great Turk*. They ſhould not handle profeſſed *Chriſtians* (though never ſo *Carnal*) as *Origen*, *Juſtin Martyr*, or *Tertullian* did *Pagan Hea-*

thens; nor lay out all their pains and oyl about the first *Elements*, though it be to demonstrate *our Religion* to be the *best* of all others, and most *perfective* of *Humane Nature*: For *Principles* are not to be made *cheap*, and every day brought upon the *Stage*, specially where they were never denied. What though one man commit *Murther*, another *Adultery*, a third *Treason*, a fourth *Blasphemy*; must I go prove in all haste, and upon every turn, that there is a *God*? They *all* know that as well as I, unless they will in their Huffs deny their *own Being*, and bely their own *Consciences*: by Arguments too far fetch'd, or proving *too much*, we prove *nothing* at all, or that which no man questions. Prudence should rather teach us, with due regard to *time*, *place*, and *persons*, to bend our utmost strength and main counsels against the *present* and most *predominant* Errors, whether in *Faith* or *Morals*.

3. An *Embassador* should have competent *Eloquence*, a *Tongue well hung* (we say), for that his proper business is to *speak*, and he is said to have his *Audience* as an *Orator*. He is to effect that which *equity* perswades, or *necessity* requires; by force of *Argument* to

 prevent

prevent the force of *Arms*, and that is not to be done by a mere noiſe and flood of words, without one drop of ſenſe; but he muſt be able to ſpeak powerfully, to move, charm, lead mens hearts in triumph, and conquer minds with the pleaſing Arms of Eloquence. *Antipater* therefore deſir'd the *Athenians* to ſend their *Orator* no more to *Him*, becauſe by his prodigious Art of ſpeaking (were the cauſe *right* or *wrong*) he baffled and topp'd all offers made againſt him. Now that St. *Paul* alludes here profeſſedly to this property, I appeal to the very *ſtile* of the Text: Only there is this difference between *Chriſts* Embaſſadors and all *others*, that *they* rely not upon their own ſtrength of parts and *Oratory*, nor take up with the common Artifices, and *enticing words of mans wiſdom*; but their chief *Rhetorick* and height of *Eloquence* lies in the *Demonſtration of the Spirit*, *Power* and *Wiſdom of God*.

4. Laſtly, An *Embaſſador* yet lacks *one thing* more before he goes; that is, a *Commiſſion*, to make his Acts *Authentick*, which were otherwiſe *null* and *void*, and himſelf a great *Cheat*. *Demoſthenes* hath left a laſting Brand of Infamy upon *Æſchines*, for going *Embaſſador* to *Philip*

on his own head: But whether we ſhould take the *Orator* for a faithful *Hiſtorian* in the caſe, may be perhaps a *queſtion*. No *queſtion* ſuch an Act were *crimen læſæ Majeſtatis* in all *Empires*; nay, *Treaſon* in a very high degree, it being a greater affront to *Sovereignty*, to counterfeit a King's *Perſon*, than either his Royal *Coin*, *Hand*, or *Seal*. Thus St. *Paul* demands peremptorily, How ſhall they *preach*, except they be *ſent*? that is, they are *falſe Apoſtles*, *Traytors* to God's everlaſting *Crown* and *Dignity*, that do preſume it. Be a man never ſo gifted and able, never ſuch a *Son* of *Thunder*, never ſo *Eloquent* and *Mighty* in *the Scriptures*; yet without due Authority, he hath no *part* or *lot in this matter*: *For no man taketh this honour to himſelf, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron, Heb.* 5. Now as the *Apoſtles* were in quality of *Embaſſadors extraordinary*, *commiſſioned* immediately by *Chriſt* himſelf, and endued with mighty gifts of the *Spirit*, neceſſary for the firſt planting of the *Chriſtian Faith*: So their lawful Succeſſors are *Liegers*, and *in ordinary, called alſo of God*; but by the Mediation of thoſe *Men*, on whom the *Apoſtles* derived their *Miſſion* and *Unction* they received from *Chriſt*.

Thus we ſee in what ſenſe they are *Embaſ-*

ſadors,

ſadors, and pardon me, if I hence *infer*, that they ought to be received as *ſuch*, and *accounted worthy* of ſingle *honour* and reſpect (at leaſt) for their very *Work* and *Office* ſake.

To aſſert the Dignity of this *Holy Calling* amongſt *Chriſtians*, was once indeed *ſuperfluous*, when men were ready to adore and *ſacrifice* to them as *Gods*, *and pluck out their own eyes for them*: But is perhaps as *neceſſary* now, when the World is run into the other *extreme*, and ſo far from *communicating to them all good things*, (*Gal.* 6.) that they will hardly give them *one good word*: When the *Apoſtate* Emperors ſcoff is ſo often laid in their diſh, That *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* deſpiſed the Wealth and Honours of this World: Though the arguing is moſt inconſequent, from their times of *Perſecution*, to ours of *Peace*; from *Heathen* Empires, to *Chriſtian* Monarchies. Beſides, if they take the *Context* along with them, they will find, that in thoſe days *Lay-Chriſtians* had as little repute or *wealth* as the *Clergy*; *all they had* (though he're ſo much) was freely *laid down* at thoſe poor *Apoſtles feet*, for the publick ſervice of the *Church*.

As for thoſe little mighty *Wits*, and goodly Maſters of *Reaſon*, that are over whetting their

Tongues

Tongues and *Pens* to expose them to *contempt*; alas, they utterly miss their aim; for it is the credit of our *Religion* and its *Ministers*, that *Nero* spake, *Celsus* wrote, and *Julian* acted against them. They are not moved at *Celsus* his prodigious *Calumny*, that they *conjured* and dealt with *familiar Spirits*; when (God knows) they only cast them out in the Name of *JESUS*. They rejoyce to suffer *shame*, and be Nick-named *Fops*, *Formalists*, and *Thinking-Fools*, by men of the same spirit with them that said the *Son of God* himself had a *Devil*. But yet these *Hero's* might remember in their *cold blood*, and *sober* intervals (if they have any) that as it is against the *Law* of *Nations* to cast dirt upon, and offer indignities to an *Embassador*, so the affront aims chiefly at his *Prince*; and such as *despise them*, *despise him that sent them*, who will in due time redeem his own Honour, and pay *them* that they have *deserved*: Mean while we'l be *reveng'd* of them too, but only in our *Churches Prayer* (and God speed it well!) that it may *please him to forgive our Enemies*, *Persecutors*, and *Slanderers*, and *to turn their hearts*. But,

2. You need not fear the *Sons of* Levi *should*

take

take too *much upon them* in this *high Title*, if you conſider their more *ſpecial Character*, as they are Embaſſadors for *Chriſt*. A *King* indeed, but one whoſe *Kingdom* was not of *this World*: Who never uſed more *ſecular* Pomp in all his life, but once *riding into* Jeruſalem *upon an Aſſes Colt*. A *King* indeed, but his Courtiers poor *Fiſhermen* and *Publicans*: his Scepter a *Reed*, his Crown made of *Thorns*, and his Throne an ignominious *Croſs*: And his *Diſciples are not greater than their Lord*, they pretend not to diſpoſe of *Crowns* and *Kingdoms*, (let him at *Rome* anſwer for that, who ſays, we know by what Right and Precedent, *All theſe will I give thee*:) They claim no *Secular* Honours or Priviledges, but what they owe to the pious Bounty of *Chriſtian Princes*, who are graciouſly pleas'd to treat them as *Prophets*; and ſhall therefore receive a *Prophets* reward: *Their power* (ſays a Learned man) is *armed only with a ſpiritual Sword* (*the wounds whereof are little felt or dreaded in this world*) *ſupported moſtly with a mean temporal Fortune; yet it has ſtood hitherto againſt all Oppoſition, and ſhall ſtand for ever.*

But whether they meet with Friends or Foes, Love or Hatred, Frowns or Favours *here*, they are ſure of a Reward more glorious *hereafter*,

if they can but give their *Maſter* (who is ſince declared *King of Kings*) a good account of their great *Errand* and *Buſineſs* here on Earth. Which leads me to the ſecond thing conſiderable, The *ſubject-matter*, *ſum* and *purport* of their *Embaſſy*, in thoſe words, *Be ye reconciled unto God.*

Reconciliation imports a returning into *Favour* and *Friendſhip*, after a former *Enmity* or *Falling out* between Parties. Now though *man* be the ſole Party *offending*, that made the breach by *ſin*, his own *voluntary* act; yet *God* hath been graciouſly *reconciled* to Him ever ſince the hour of *Chriſts* Death, which he accepted as a *full and perfect ſatisfaction for the ſins of the whole World*: All the difficulty is (which ſo many *Embaſſadors* are daily ſent about) to prevail with *man* to be reconciled to *God*. *Reconciled?* Surely that muſt be an *hard ſaying*, clogg'd with ſome impoſſible Condition, that makes men ſtart ſo at, fly from, and not endure to hear on't. Yes, it is ſo; for it requires them to do --What ſhall I ſay? to do juſt *nothing*, in compariſon; rather to be *paſſive* (as the Verb καταλλάγητε here is) and not hinder *God* from making them *happy*. Yes; it requires them to renounce their own Merits (and that's a mighty piece of *Self-denial* for wretched ſinners that never

never had *any*) and then cry *Peccavi*, before they can obtain *Mercy*: It lays that *grievous* burthen upon them, to be *Friends* with *God*, or rather to ſuffer *God* to be ſo far *Lord* of their *Wills*, as to advance them (like the great *Abraham*) to be his boſom *Friends* and *Favourites*. In a word, and not to mince the matter, there being no *name under Heaven, whereby we can be ſaved, but* the *Name of JESUS*, it requires us all to believe ſtedfaſtly in, and depend wholly upon *Him*, both for *pardon* of our ſins, and *power* againſt them. 1. For *Pardon*, we muſt ſue *that* out in and through his *Death*; for without his *precious Blood-ſhed, there is no remiſſion of ſins*, and without our acceptance, none for *us* however. Though there be *Balm* in *Gilead*, and a *Phyſician there*, yet if men will not uſe them, no wonder if they *periſh*, and *their blood be upon their own heads*: They may think never ſo well of their own *Works* and *Ways*, but when all is done, they muſt take Sanctuary in that *new and living way, which he conſecrated for us through the veil*, that is, *his Fleſh*, Heb. 10. or they're undone for ever. For as we are not of kin to *Chriſt*, but only by the *Mothers* ſide, as he is *fleſh of our fleſh, and bone of our bone*, and God the *Father* doth forgive no mans ſins,

but for *Chriſt's* Merits, offer'd in *our Nature* upon the *Croſs*: And ſo doth he convey *this* and all other Bleſſings to us, only through his *Son*, as our *Mediator*; that is, through his *Humanity*, as the only *Band* by which we are *united* and *reconciled* to the *Divine Nature*. Wherefore, 2. We muſt depend upon him alſo for *Grace* and *Power* againſt *ſin*, by virtue of his *Reſurrection* and *Life*, to purifie our *Hearts* and *Conſciences*, and keep that Tyrant *Sin* from *reigning* (at leaſt) *in our* mortal Bodies. Never did the moſt *Gracious Prince* pardon *Rebels*, but upon that *one* Condition, That they would turn *Loyal Subjects*: Therefore (ſays Saint *Paul*) if any man be in *Chriſt*, he is a *new Creature*; he has a *new* heart, *new* deſires, *new* principles, *new* life, all things *new*: He's not the *ſame* man, he's quite chang'd, like the *Prodigal Son*, *come to himſelf*, to a ſenſe of his *former* follies, and *preſent* wants; or like the *man among the Tombs*, who when the *Devils* were gone out of him, ſate *dutifully at Jeſus feet*, *clothed*, *and in his right mind*. This is indeed the hardeſt *Chapter* in all our *Word* of *Reconciliation*; but yet he that *runs* may *read* it, if (with holy *David*) he takes the right *courſe*, *Commit thy way unto the Lord*, *and put thy truſt in him*, *and he ſhall bring it to paſs*: For is there any thing

thing impoſſible with *God*? The *heart* of all men, even of *Kings* (ſays *Solomon*) *is in the hand of the Lord, as Rivers of water, he turneth it whitherſoever he pleaſeth.* What though Nature of it ſelf be weak and impotent, ſo long as it is now *endued with power from on high*? Indeed our Saviour tells us plainly (to ſhew us our own inſufficiency) *without Me ye can do nothing*: But Saint *Paul* as truly anſwers for himſelf, and us alſo, *I can do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthens me.* And when we read that ſuch *Vertue went out* of *Chriſt* (whilſt in the *form of a Servant*) that it cur'd the *Woman* of her *Bloody Iſſue*, upon but touching the *Hem* of his *Garment*, why ſhould it ſeem incredible that his glorified Humane Nature (now he is *Lord of all*) ſhould diſtil his vertual Preſence and Life upon our Souls, to heal our infirmities? that he ſhould impart his own Graces to us, and derive certain *meaſures* of the ſame *holy Spirit* upon us, which himſelf *as man*, had *without meaſure*; becauſe in *him the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt bodily*? Why ſhould it be thought ſtrange, that this holy Spirit that united *God* and *Man* in one Perſon, ſhould as *really* unite us to our own Nature in *Chriſt*, the *Body to the Head*, the *Branches to the Vine*,

and *make him dwell in us*, and *us in him*; *him one with us*, *and us with him*, as the Scripture ſpeaks. If any man think our *Union* with *Chriſt* to be merely *Political*; that is, no more than you may conceive between *King Bramble* (in the Parable) and the reſt of the *Trees* his *Subjects*, he is in a very novel and groſs miſtake: To which I ſhall at preſent only oppoſe the words of two or three ſound Divines of our own Church; *Though the Holy Ghoſt doth work Faith and other Graces in our Souls, yet he doth not by theſe unite our Souls or Spirits immediately to himſelf, but unto Chriſts Humane Nature*; So the profound Doctor *Jackſon*. *Chriſt is as truly united to me, and I to him, as my arm is united and knit to my ſhoulder*; So the Judicious *Hooker* in plain Engliſh. *By the influence of his preſent life, Chriſt undergoes, as it were, a ſecond Incarnation, living and dwelling in our hearts by his Grace, and reigning powerfully in our ſouls by Faith*: So the Learned *Chillingworth*, to add no more; So that upon the whole matter, the ſum of our *Embaſſy* is this, That *JESUS CHRIST* is both the *Author and finiſher of our Faith*; that he hath ſolemnly promis'd to *give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him*; that if men be not wanting to themſelves, but reſign

their

their hearts to his Conduct, nay, if they don't forcibly *reſiſt* him, and quench the holy flames he kindles in their Souls through his Servants Miniſtry, he will make them real partakers of the Grace of *Chriſt*, by working in them a firm Hope, fervent Love, pure Conſcience, clean Heart, ſober Mind, chaſt Body, pious Soul, holy Life, and firſt and laſt, a true Faith in *Jeſus Chriſt*, without which it is *impoſſible to pleaſe*, or to be *reconciled to God*.

And if theſe things be ſo, I cannot but animadvert a while upon thoſe *falſe Apoſtles*, and *deceitful Workers*, who inſtead of building, are ever pecking at the Foundation of our Faith with their *Axes* and *Hammers*, in great *Blaſphemies*, and leſſer *Criticiſms*, to change the *old ſound word* of *Reconciliation*, for new Idea's, and devices of their own, and other mens Brains: That would ſupplant *Chriſtian* Religion with *Natural* Theology; and turn the *Grace* of God into a *wanton* Notion of *Morality*; that impiouſly deny both the *Lord that bought them*, and his *Holy Spirit*, *that ſhould ſeal them to the day of Redemption*, making *Reaſon*, *Reaſon*, *Reaſon*, their only *Trinity*, and ſole Standard, whereby to meaſure both the Principles and Concluſions of *Faith*; that preach up *Natural* and *Moral* Religion,

ligion, without the *Grace* of *God*, and *Faith* in *Chriſt*; which is at beſt, beginning at the wrong end, and making Superſtructures without a Foundation: For the *Jew* cannot be ſaved by the Law of *Moſes*, much leſs the *Gentile* by all the Works of the Law of *Nature*; which unleſs actuated by a lively *Faith*, are no better than the *cutting off a Dogs neck*, or the *Sacrifice of a Fool*. A Truth that *Socrates* himſelf (in an ancient Dialogue aſcribed to *Plato*) makes no ſcruple to conſent unto, when he ſays ingenuouſly ---that *no man can be Good and Virtuous by Nature, Art, Diſcipline, Example, or any other manner of way, but only by Divine Inſpiration*: So far do they outſtrip a very *Heathen*, that teach---*a good life will carry men to Heaven, though they be Jews, Turks, Antichriſtians, or never ſuch damnable Hereticks in point of Faith.* If any ſuch as theſe be *crept in among* us *unawares*, I am ſure there is as much need of a *Teſt* for *them* (how ſlily ſoever they carry it by amuſing the world with other fears) as for the rankeſt Error in all the *Pope's* Dominions. And I beſeech you (Brethren in our *Lord*) beware of them: Ye ſhall *know them by their Fruits*; as *He* himſelf foretels you: He does not mean the *Fruits* of their Lives (for they are the cloſeſt of all other *Hypocrites*, they

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go demurely in *Sheeps cloathing too:*) But the *Fruits* and Conſequents of their Doctrin; which are diſmal enough (one would think) to make themſelves *afraid*, as *Moſes* was of his own *Rod* turn'd into a *Serpent*: For they are ſuch as theſe ---*That there is no ſuch thing as ſupernatural Grace*, ---*That Chriſt died in vain*,---*That ye are yet in your ſins*,---*and every man muſt be his own Saviour, or he is damn'd for ever.* From which---Good *Lord* deliver us! and *God* grant, that, by the Wiſdom and Vigilance of the *Defender* of our *Faith*, and his *Prelates* under *Him*, no ſuch Forein Poiſon may be privily conveighed (through Preſs or Pulpit) into our *Church*: That thoſe black-mouth'd Authors bearing date from *Irenopolis*, may receive ſo *timely* and *publick* a check, as that we ſhall not need to fear their growing the only *Divines* in Vogue by the next Age: That we may never live to ſee our Youth trained up in the *Cracovian Catechiſm*; never live to hear our ſelves called by any other *New Name*, but that of *God's* own giving; That as the Diſciples were *firſt* called at *Antioch*, ſo they be *laſt* called *Chriſtians* here in *England*.

And now I come to the third and last part of my Text, The *manner* of the true *Embassadors* Address; in those words---*As though God did beseech you by us, We pray you in Christ's stead.*

Which is, first, modest and humble: *We pray and beseech.* Let those Haughty *Polish Envoys* swagger themselves and others out of their *Creed*: Let the *Disciplinarian Agents* Reprobate all the World, but their own private *Elect*: Let the *Pope's* Legates *à Latere*, *Lord it* over mens Estates and Consciences; let *Them will* and *require* all upon pain of Damnation, to put their necks under his feet, who in the Pride of his heart, writes himself, *Servus Servorum*, that is (in the Vulgar Translation) *Lord of Lords*: As for us we have no such Message, we have not *so learned Christ.* We only pray you as *men* for whom *Christ died*, *quit your selves like men*, and flie to Mercy speedily, lest you fall into the hands of Justice, by letting your *Sun go down upon the wrath of God.* You have all a merciful Saviour, who never did, never will refuse a sincere Penitent (if you will take his own word for it) *Him that cometh unto me*, (ὁ μὴ) *I will in no wise*, by no means *cast out.* We beseech you as *Christians*, who have not only heard *there is a*

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Holy Ghoſt, but are baptized into the name of the Eternal *Trinity*; have often *taſted of the heavenly Gifts and Powers of the World to come.* We beſeech you, let the *love of Chriſt conſtrain you*, to improve the Talent put into your hand, and ſuffer his Holy Spirit to blow up thoſe ſparks of Grace ye have covered o're with aſhes in your hearts. O let not that Bleſſed *Comforter* depart finally from you, for the World, as he did from *Saul*; (for then an Evil Spirit will ſoon poſſeſs, and vex, and ſend you to *Endor*:) But if ye have neglected his Grace, and fallen into ſin (as who can plead Not-guilty? Who can tell *how oft he offendeth?*) implore his aſſiſtance *heartily*, wait his approach *humbly*, and attend his motions *earneſtly*, and he will raiſe you again to *Newneſs of Life*, he will bring you freſh Auxiliaries from your *glorified Saviour*, and in due time unite you ſo firmly unto *Him*, that your ſins ſhall be chargeable only upon *Him*; *His* Merits put on your Accompt, and ſufficient *Virtue ſhall go out of Him to cleanſe you from all Unrighteouſneſs.*

2. And laſtly, be their *Addreſs* never ſo *humble*, it runs in a more than *Humane* ſtile, for,

We pray you in Christs ſtead, and however you put us off till a more *convenient ſeaſon*; Yet (as the voice from Heaven ſaid) *hear Him*, *Him* that once took the *Curſe* of God upon him for you; and is ever at his right hand interceding for his *Bleſſings* on you; *Him*, to whom *all power is committed both in Heaven and Eearth*; who even as Son of *Man*, is now Lord of *Angels*, *Lord of all*. The Requeſts of *Kings* have been uſed to go for Commands with dutiful *Subjects*; And when the *King of Kings prays* and begs but one thing of you, can ye poſſibly deny *Him*? Sure no *Man* can be ſo much a *Monſter*; no *Gentleman* ſo much a *Jew*. *We pray you in Chriſt's ſtead*: What ſhall I ſay more? Yes; not only the glorified Son of *Man*, but *God* himſelf doth *beſeech you by us too*. Wonder not that he ſpeaks to you by men of *like paſſions* with your ſelves, unleſs you wonder at his infinite Mercy: For ye can neither *ſee* nor hear *Him* and *live*; one glimpſe (ye know) even of *Chriſt's* glorious *Body*, ſtruck *Saul* to the *ground blind*, and half dead: *Speak Thou with us* (ſaid *Iſrael* to *Moſes*) *and let not God ſpeak with us, leſt we die*. Beſides, it is *God's* Prerogative alone, to ſhew his own *Strength* by the moſt *weak* Inſtruments. It was

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not a man of mean Perſon and Preſence, and then a *Priſoner* at the Bar too, that made the ſtout *Felix* ſhake and *tremble*: It was not *Elijah's* word (a ſilly plain Prophet) that fell like Thunder upon the great guilty *Ahab*, and ſtruck a *Palſie* into his Joynts, and forc'd him to his *Sackcloth* and *Aſhes*; but the *Word* of the *Living God*; which if, as ſoft *Fire*, it cannot melt, like a ſtrong Hammer oft breaks the Rocky Heart in pieces. The ſame *God* doth not now thunder and threaten, but *pray* and *beſeech you by us*: *Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O Earth!* The Almighty *Creator* becomes (as it were) an humble Petitioner to his own *Creature*; and to ſhew he is in good earneſt, becauſe he could not ſwear by a greater, he hath ſworn by himſelf, upon his own *Life* and *Honour*, *As I live (ſaith the Lord) I will not the death of a ſinner*: Who can deſpiſe ſuch ardent Love? Who can ſpurn at ſuch infinite tender Bowels? Who can reſiſt that *ſtill ſmall voice*, the ſecret, but piercing and importunate whiſpers of his Holy *Spirit* in your hearts, which the Tongue of *Men and Angels* cannot expreſs, no, nor all the powers of *Men and Devils* (without your own conſent) render ineffectual? And what doth the

Lord thy God thus *require*, nay, *requeſt and beſeech of thee, O Man?* If he had *bid thee do ſome great thing, to cure thy* natural *Leproſie*, wouldſt thou *not have done it?* How much rather then, when he ſaith unto thee, only *waſh in the blood of the Covenant*, and *be clean?* Only be *reconciled*, be hearty friends with thy *God*, make what returns thou canſt of his wonderful Love. Indeed the *tinkling of three little Bells in a Country Steeple*, and the Peaſants flocking to *the Towns end*, *and crying*, *GOD SAVE THE KING*, *adds not much to the Majeſty of a Potent Monarch*; yet (as that great Preacher and Prelate obſerves) it *is all they can do; it ſhews their honeſt love, and hearty affections, and ſo ſounds well, and pleaſes the Royal ear*: Much more will your merciful God accept the will for the deed: And let but men husband their proportion of *Grace* as well as they can; let them but ſhew their integrity of heart, and earneſt deſires, and then do their faithful endeavours to *ſerve*, *love*, and *honour Him*, and he asks no more; being ready to ſupply all their defects and imperfections, out of the inexhauſtible Fountain of *Chriſts Righteouſneſs*. This is all that *God doth beſeech you by us*; and if any man will deny him this, he muſt needs con-

feſs his *Damnation is juſt*; which *God* forbid, and I have done: *For we are Embaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God the Holy Ghoſt did beſeech you by us, We pray you in Chriſt God the Son's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God the Father.* To which eternal *Trinity, one God*, be the eternal *Kingdom, Power and Glory.* Amen.

FINIS.

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